



MASTER FILE

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Subject: Observation of Operations Test and Dry Run in Pomona Data  
Capture Center on November 3 and 4, 1999

I visited the Pomona Data Capture Centers (DCC) on November 3 and 4, 1999 to observe the Operation Test and Dry Run. Everyone I met with at the DCC was very helpful and knowledgeable of the operations. I observed several operations and attended the end of the day staff meeting where the current day's activities and progress were reviewed.

I met with the staff constructing the training for the Audit and Resolution which is the clerical review of cases failing the Data Capture Audit Resolution (DCAR) edit. I also met with the persons that will supervise the Audit and Resolution procedure in the Pomona, Phoenix and Baltimore DCCs. In the course of the meeting I discussed the purpose of the Audit and Resolution and answered many question about the Audit and Resolution process. I clarified that the Audit and Resolution clerks are required to review the question on household size (reported household size), the person panels and the rosters. Their job is to ensure that information about the household size is accurately captured and that the status of persons reported on the questionnaires is accurate. I stressed that the Audit and Resolution clerks should not attempt to make the information on household size consistent with the number of persons reported. They should not use responses to the reported household size to decide the status of person panels and names on the rosters and vice versa. I felt that the training author and supervisors fully understood the purpose Audit and Resolution after discussing these issues.

The DCAR definitions of person panel and roster name status codes were reviewed during my meeting with the supervisors and trainer. Also, many details concerning the interpretation of data during the Audit and Resolution were discussed. I agreed to help the Pomona DCC Audit and Resolution supervisor prepare an outline of procedures that incorporated the topics we discussed. The topics covered are listed below by questionnaire section.

– Count Review of Household Population Count

During the review of the reported household size, clerks should look for and enter responses written outside the response field. If a number is spelled out, they should enter the appropriate numeric. They should ignore responses that are obviously crossed out by the respondent.

– Status Review of Person Panels

- The Audit and Resolution clerks may change a Valid status to Invalid and vice versa although they cannot enter or correct the data reported in the person panels or on the rosters.
- For the relationship, race and Hispanic origin items, one or more legal characters in the write-in field constitutes a response when no race categories have been selected.
- The clerks should look for indications of responses other than a marked response box. The clerks should treat circled or underlined response items as an acceptable response. They should read and interpret any notes written on the questionnaire.
- The clerks should look for canceled responses such as person panels that have been crossed out, individual questions that have been crossed out and roster names that have been crossed out. These should be treated as blank items.
- Person panels that have been completely crossed out should be coded as Invalid.
- Entries in the name fields that seem fictitious names should be accepted. For example, Mickey Mouse, Bill Clinton, etc.
- If an entry in the name field indicates that the data in the person panel should be ignored, the clerks are allowed to change a Valid status to Invalid based on the name entry. However, we agreed that the clerks should consult with a supervisor before making such a change. Examples of these kinds of entries are: No more, Blank, Ignore, Mistake, Not Used and None.

- Duplicate person panels must have names, and age or date of birth must be filled. The age and date of birth fields must exactly. If a portion of these fields is blank for one person panel it must be blank for the duplicate person panel. This definition is slightly more stringent than the definition used in the automated DCAR edit.
- Status Review of Roster Names
  - Entries in the name fields that seem fictitious names should be accepted.
  - If an entry in the name field indicates that the roster entry should be ignore, the clerks are allowed to change a Valid status to Invalid. As with the person panels, we agreed that the clerks should consult with a supervisor before making such a type of status change.
  - Roster names that are crossed out should be coded as Invalid.

I had the opportunity to conduct Audit and Resolution on about 30 cases with several persons observing the process. The Audit and Resolution software is easy to use and each case was completed very quickly. The software allows the operator to view an image of the entire first page of the questionnaire. I found this feature was very helpful for the count review. When I was unsure of the numeric value displayed in the image snippet of the short form's Item 1 (Number of people), viewing the entire first page to see a larger sample of the respondents hand writing often helped interpret the response. I suggest that the training stress this feature. On the count review cases the operator must use a function key to set the cursor on the first entry field for the number of persons. I and several observers agreed that placing the cursor directly on the entry field when the screen comes up would save an unnecessary key stroke and make the operator's job easier.

I was given a tour of the Key From Paper (KFP) area and observed several operators key questionnaires from paper. The KFP area is equipped with 56 work stations and the DCC plans to run two shifts of keying each day. Currently it takes approximately 15 minutes to key a short form once and 30 minutes to key a long form once. Each questionnaire is keyed twice to verify the data entry. An end of day production report for KFP showed that 20 person hours were required to complete the keying of 24 long forms and two short forms. The data entry screen for the KFP shows an image similar to the paper questionnaire. I observed that the clerks passed through every data entry field (including blank fields) as they progressed through the questionnaire. This may account for the lengthy period required to key a questionnaire.